

Bush instituted a ban that likely will spur even more abortions in Third World countries.

Bush banned federal aid from international organizations that perform or "actively promote" abortion as a family planning method.

Yet those are the same groups that promote birth control so women can avoid abortions. And because illegal abortions are rampant in Third World countries, those organizations cannot eliminate abortion discussions from their services.

Such groups must be able to counsel women who are seeking illegal abortions. Without such counsel, many women die during illegal abortions—and many don't learn about family planning methods that can make abortion unnecessary.

The only way to stem the high rate of abortions in such countries is to make family planning readily available. But when the U.S. strips money from family planning groups, it also strips hope that Third World women will have access to birth control.

So Bush's action, while oddly satisfying to anti-abortion forces, ironically guarantees that abortions will continue to increase.

Opponents denounced it as an "international gag rule" on discussion of abortions, a move that would be unconstitutional if imposed in the United States.

Yet some anti-abortion activists even question why the U.S. should provide any family planning to foreign countries. "I'm not sure it's an effective use of our tax dollars . . ." said Chuck Gosnell, president of the Colorado Christian Coalition.

The Post, however, has historically upheld the need to support worldwide family planning—not only to save women from horrible deaths, but also to quell the population explosion in impoverished nations.

Using tax dollars to prevent unwanted pregnancies is far more cost-effective than spending huge sums to feed starving populations who remain unenlightened about family planning.

We deeply regret Bush's action Monday, and we urge the administration to reconsider the ultimate effects of such a ban.

[From the Daily Camera, Jan. 25, 2001]

Bush the Divider

During his campaign, President George W. Bush sought to keep the hot-button issue of abortion off the radar screens of both the media and the voters.

When pressed, he pointed to his long, strong anti-abortion record. But often he tempered that message by saying "good people can disagree" on the issue—as well he might, given his wife Laura's recent remarks in favor of keeping abortion legal, and his mother's similar sentiments. He also suggested he might be a moderate on the issue when he said repeatedly that many hearts and minds would have to be changed before the nation was ready to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that made access to abortion a constitutional right.

Following the disputed election—in which pro-choice Al Gore won the popular vote by more than a half million votes—many abortion-rights supporters hoped that Bush's lack of a mandate would keep his anti-abortion instincts in check.

Some of those same optimists even crossed their fingers and hoped that John Ashcroft, Bush's profoundly anti-abortion nominee for Attorney General, was telling the truth when he said his personal views would not affect his enforcement of abortion-related

laws, from clinic access to *Roe v. Wade* itself. Ashcroft went so far as to declare that he considers the landmark case "the settled law of the land."

Such hopes surely were dashed Monday—Bush's second full day in office—when he marked the 28th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* by reinstating the "global gag rule," which prevents overseas family planning organizations that receive U.S. aid from even discussing abortion or lobbying for legalized abortion in their countries.

Using U.S. funds to pay for actual abortions, or even to promote abortion, already is prohibited under the annually-renewed Helms Amendment, adopted in 1973. This "gag rule" was tied on by President Reagan in 1984 and maintained by President George H.W. Bush. It was overturned in the opening days of President Clinton's first term.

Bush's reinstatement is mostly a symbolic bone thrown to his anti-abortion supporters, since statistics show the gag rule hasn't reduced abortions in the past. But forcing family planning agencies to choose between desperately-needed dollars and providing full and accurate information means that many women will go without any care at all.

Bush also took pains to issue encouraging words (albeit through a proxy) to an anti-abortion protest in the capital Monday: ". . . you are gathered to remind our country that one of those ideals is the infinite value of every life."

And, to complete a Monday trifecta, Bush's chief of staff Andrew Card told reporters that the new administration is "reviewing" the recent Food and Drug Administration approval of the abortion pill, RU-486.

And so, despite recent public opinion polls that show about 60 percent of Americans believe abortion should be legal in all or most cases, despite hopeful predictions that he would hew to a moderate line in the wake of his tenuous election victory, Bush the self-declared "uniter" has thrown down the abortion gauntlet from the outset.

Some political analysts have suggested he may be trying to fatten his supporters on the socially-conservative right with treats right now so they'll still be sated later on in the banquet, when the time comes to reach compromise with hungry Democrats.

That may be. But surely Bush could have chosen a less contentious issue to mollify his conservative base. By rushing in to demonstrate his allegiance to those who would impose their beliefs on the nation and ban abortion, he has demonstrated in his first week that he missed some important lessons of his sketchy victory.

[From the Denver Post, Jan. 24, 2001]

GAG RULE DECRIED

Re: "Abortion opponents jubilant," Jan. 23 news story.

President Bush's re-instatement of the gag rule on international family planning aid is the worst example of "compassionate conservatism" possible.

As Sylvia Clark, a life-long Republican and president and CEO of Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains, said Monday:

"In short, the U.S. government will be telling the desperately poor women of the developing world, 'Don't you dare ask about abortion options, because if you do, you will lose access to the family planning that could prevent you from ever needing an abortion in the first place.'"

Some history here: From 1984-1993 Ronald Reagan's "Mexico City Policy" prohibited recipients of international family planning

assistance from providing abortion services or offering medical advice to women dealing with an unintended pregnancy.

President Clinton rescinded that policy in early 1993.

Right now, nearly two out of every five pregnancies worldwide are still unintended. Early and frequent pregnancy contributes significantly to the deaths of infants, children and women in developing countries, where a woman dies literally every minute in childbirth or because of complications of pregnancy.

But, when contraceptive prevalence rates rise, rates of unintended pregnancies, maternal deaths and abortion go down.

Restrictions on international family planning assistance will do nothing to stop abortion. In fact they will increase the number of times desperate women turn to abortion as a means to control family size.

Instead of reinstating the gag rule, Bush should have made good on his original promise stated to *The New York Times* "to find common ground and reduce the number of abortions that happen."

Yet, President Bush's gag rule policies will promote exactly the opposite. It will increase the number of abortions that happen. For shame, Mr. President!

DOTTIE LAMM,
Denver.

ARIEL SHARON'S COMMENT

HON. CYNTHIA A. MCKINNEY

OF GEORGIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Ms. MCKINNEY. Mr. Speaker, how dare Ariel Sharon comment about Condoleezza Rice's legs. I wonder what his legs look like. And let me go on to say how "unsexy" some people might think he looks. But they don't say it out loud! Probably they would be too busy thinking about that and unable to keep their mind on their work.

Why would he say such a thing out loud?

But does that have anything to do with his effectiveness as an Israeli leader? No.

Neither his legs nor his sexiness has anything to do with whether he will stand for peace, make war, or whether he is competent to do the job for which he has been chosen.

Likewise, Dr. Rice's looks have nothing to do with her effectiveness as a leader or as National Security Advisor to President Bush.

The press seems to think this episode is cute.

But it's an insult for all the women out there who go to school, study hard, then work long hours to break the glass ceiling. The last thing we need is for some boorish man who can control neither his libido nor his tongue to come on publicly to women he finds attractive.

I think Mr. Sharon owes all women, especially working women, an apology.

TRIBUTE TO THE LATE SENATOR ALAN CRANSTON

HON. JOE BACA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

Mr. BACA. Mr. Speaker, I would like to express my sympathies to the family of the late